

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 321-2015

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: August 12, 2015

SUBJECT: 10th Street Bayfront Water Quality Update

The purpose of this Letter to Commission is to provide an update on City staff's activities regarding the water quality adjacent to the 10th Street bayfront.

Last week the City received concerns regarding the presence of a plume in the vicinity of the 10th Street bayfront. Since then, City staff has been conducting daily visual inspections and has deployed divers in the water to assess the conditions in the area. Furthermore, we retained an environmental services firm that collected surface water quality samples on August 4, 2015.

Turbidity samples collected from a sediment plume identified during visual inspections showed elevated levels of turbidity. We have identified that the plume is caused by the velocity of pumped water at a nearby outfall, which stirs up sediments in the bay bottom much like a boat propeller. As such, we have installed a turbidity curtain around the outfalls to limit the extent of the plume until a more permanent solution can be identified.

Samples collected from inside the plume were also analyzed for Total Recoverable Petroleum Hydrocarbons and compared to the results of a background sample taken approximately 1,500 feet south of the plume. The results from this analysis did not show elevated concentrations of petroleum hydrocarbons. To date, the only items that have been documented coming out of the outfall are leaf litter and a few small plastic bags.

Today the City received reports of a sheen at the site. I, along with City staff, including Assistant City Manager Mark Taxis, City Engineer Bruce Mowry and Environmental Manager Margarita Wells, inspected the area from land and from the water. Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, who were onsite, confirmed that the minimal sheen was not a cause for concern. The U.S. Coast Guard and Miami-Dade County were also present and issued no violations.

We take the condition of our waterways very seriously and have a multi-faceted stormwater management program in place to minimize stormwater pollution. The first component of this program focuses on preventing pollutants from entering our stormwater system through public education, daily street sweeping, and other good housekeeping practices. The second component of this program focuses on trapping debris within the system and removing it from the stormwater via Vortex structures and other pollution control structures. The third component of the program focuses on regular cleaning and maintenance of our stormwater structures to remove pollutants from our system. It is our goal to clean the entire system at least once per year, and the Vortex structures at least quarterly.

It is important to recognize that the pumped system continues to only discharge stormwater, as the gravity system has for 100 years. Our stormwater system is not discharging anything new. On the contrary, the pumped discharges are cleaner than the ones from the gravity system because they are filtered before reaching the bay as evidenced in our latest MBTV segment: https://youtu.be/wHdRn_PF6V8. These enhancements, in conjunction with our comprehensive stormwater management program, help us improve and preserve the quality of our waterways and vital marine resources.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

MT/ETC/MKW

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